

REPORT

Of the Committee of Ways and Means on the petition of Francis G. Macey, and others; accompanied with a bill for their relief.

JANUARY 16, 1824.

Read, and, with the bill, committed to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.

The Committee of Ways and Means, to whom was referred the petition of Francis G. Macey, and others,

REPORT:

That the petitioners, citizens of the United States, residing at Nantucket, in the state of Massachusetts, in the year 1820 fitted out the ship General Jackson, and despatched her to the Pacific Ocean, on a whaling voyage; that they shipped, as Master, one John Fisher, who they then believed to be a citizen of the United States:

That the said John Fisher came to the United States from Great Britain when young, and has resided in this country ever since, pursuing the occupation of a mariner; that, in the year 1814, he applied to the courts of Massachusetts to be naturalized, and obtained from the clerk a certificate of his application, which he treated as an act of naturalization, and actually served the United States in the late war with Great Britain.

Owing to these circumstances, the petitioners were led to suppose, that the said John Fisher was a citizen of the United States, and did not discover the mistake, until after the vessel had sailed on her voyage.

The petitioners further allege, that, in consequence of this mistake, they were compelled, on the arrival of the said ship General Jackson at the port of Nantucket, to give bonds to the United States, for the duties on the cargo of spermaceti oil brought by the said vessel, amounting to the sum of 6858 dollars and 22 cents, and for 76 dollars 93 cents for extra tonnage duty; against which they pray to be relieved.

The Committee are satisfied, that there was no intention on the part of the petitioners to commit any fraud on the revenue, or to violate the laws of the United States.

They acted under the impression, that the person employed by them as master of their ship was a citizen of the United States; they could have no motive to violate the law in this respect; and, there is no reason to believe that they are chargeable with any improper negligence.

The Committee believe it would be unreasonable, under these circumstances, to deprive the petitioners of the fruits of their enterprise, and therefore report a bill.